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**Introduction to the 1950’s, 60’s, and 70’s Culture and Society**

**JFK Assassinated**

**MLK Assassinated**

**JFK Assassination Conspiracy Theories**

**Robert Kennedy Assassinated**

**Race Riots**

**March on Washington**

**The Civil Rights Movement**

**Vice-President Resigns**

**Kent State University Protests**

**Watergate Scandal**

**Vietnam War Protests**

**Hippies**

**Iran Hostage Crisis**

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The movement against U.S. involvement in the Vietnam War began small–among peace activists and leftist intellectuals on college campuses–but gained national prominence in 1965, after the United States began bombing North Vietnam in earnest. Anti-war marches and other protests, such as the ones organized by Students for a Democratic Society (SDS), attracted a widening base of support over the next three years, peaking in early 1968 after the successful Tet Offensive by North Vietnamese troops proved that war’s end was nowhere in sight. By early February 1968, a Gallup poll showed only 35 percent of the population approved of Johnson’s handling of the war and a full 50 percent disapproved. A protest in Washington D.C. brought more than 100,000 anti-war protesters to the Lincoln Memorial.

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In 1973, Spiro Agnew was investigated by the United States Attorney for the District of Maryland on charges of extortion, tax fraud, bribery, and conspiracy. He was charged with having accepted bribes totaling more than $100,000 while holding office as Baltimore County Executive, Governor of Maryland, and Vice President. On October 10 that same year, Agnew was allowed to plead no contest to a single charge that he had failed to report $29,500 of income received in 1967, with the condition that he resign the office of Vice President. Nixon later replaced Agnew by appointing House Minority Leader Gerald Ford as Vice President.

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A wave of civil disturbance that swept the United States beginning on April 4, 1968. This movement was the greatest wave of social unrest the United States experienced since the Civil War. The largest concentration of disobedience took place in Washington, D.C., Baltimore, Louisville, Kansas City, and Chicago. The immediate cause of the disturbances was the assassination of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Not only was King a beloved leader in the civil rights movement, but also a major advocate for nonviolence. He was a symbol of direct engagement with the political system (as opposed to the separatist idea of black nationalism). His death led some people to feel angry and disillusioned, as though now only violent resistance to white racism could be effective.

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On May 4, l970 members of the Ohio National Guard fired into a crowd of University students, killing four and wounding nine. The impact of the shootings was dramatic. The event triggered a nationwide student strike that forced hundreds of colleges and universities to close. H. R. Haldeman, a top aide to President Richard Nixon, suggests the shootings had a direct impact on national politics. In The Ends of Power, Haldeman, states that the shootings at Kent State began the slide into Watergate, eventually destroying the Nixon administration. Beyond the direct effects of the May 4th, the shootings have certainly come to symbolize the deep political and social divisions that so sharply divided the country during the Vietnam War era.

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On November 4, 1979, a group of Iranian students stormed the U.S. Embassy in Tehran, taking more than 60 American hostages. The immediate cause of this action was President Jimmy Carter’s decision to allow Iran’s deposed Shah, a pro-Western autocrat who had been expelled from his country some months before, to come to the United States for cancer treatment. However, the hostage-taking was about more than the Shah’s medical care: it was a dramatic way for the student revolutionaries to declare a break with Iran’s past and an end to American interference in its affairs.

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The following day, 22 November 1963, at 12.30pm, The President was travelling in an open top car through the streets of Dallas when three loud rifle shots rang through the air, apparently shot from the sixth floor of the nearby Book Depository building. According to official reports, the first of these bullets missed its mark, while the second penetrated the back of the President’s neck.

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Early in the morning of June 17, 1972, several burglars were arrested inside the office of the Democratic National Committee (DNC), located in the Watergate building in Washington, D.C. This was no ordinary robbery: The prowlers were connected to President Richard Nixon’s reelection campaign, and they had been caught while attempting to wiretap phones and steal secret documents. While historians are not sure whether Nixon knew about the Watergate espionage operation before it happened, he took steps to cover it up afterwards, raising “hush money” for the burglars, trying to stop the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) from investigating the crime, destroying evidence and firing uncooperative staff members. In August 1974, after his role in the Watergate conspiracy had finally come to light, the president resigned.

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This event was an interracial assembly by 250,000 blacks and whites on August 28, 1963 in Washington D.C., protesting segregation and job discrimination against blacks in the nation. Also called March for Freedom and Jobs, marchers were protesting against segregation in public accommodations and widespread job discrimination against blacks. The specific purpose of the march was to highlight general racial injustices against blacks and to pressure Congress to pass the civil rights bill proposed by President John F. Kennedy on June 12.

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A ten-month investigation from November 1963 to September 1964 by the Warren Commission concluded that the assassination was carried out by Lee Harvey Oswald, acting alone, and that Jack Ruby also acted alone when he killed Oswald before he could stand trial. In contrast to the conclusions of the Warren Commission, the United States House Select Committee on Assassinations (HSCA) concluded in 1979 that the assassination was probably the result of a conspiracy. A 1998 CBS News poll showed that 76% of Americans believed the assassination had been the result of a conspiracy.

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On April 3, 1968 this person delivered what would be his last speech, known as the “I’ve been to the mountaintop” speech, from within the Mason Temple, headquarters of the Pentecostal ‘Church of God in Christ’ in Memphis, Tennessee. Outside a thunderstorm blew up as King addressed his enthusiastic audience: “I have been to the mountain top and I have seen the Promised Land… And I’ve seen the Promised Land. I may not get there with you. But I want you to know tonight, that we, as a people, will get to the Promised Land.”

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The counterculture seemed to grow more outlandish as the 1960’s wore on. Some young people “dropped out” of political life altogether. These “hippies” grew their hair long and practiced “free love.” Some moved to communes, away from the turbulence that had come to define everyday life in the 1960s. In the summer of 1969, for example, more than 400,000 young people trooped to the Woodstock music festival in upstate New York, a harmonious three days that seemed to represent the best of the peace-and-love generation. This movement is often associated with drug use, free love, and anti-war sentiments.

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This series of events was a mass popular movement to secure for African Americans equal access to and opportunities for the basic privileges and rights of U.S. citizenship. Although the roots of the movement go back to the 19th century, it peaked in the 1950s and 1960s. African American men and women, along with whites, organized and led the movement at national and local levels. They pursued their goals through legal means, negotiations, petitions, and nonviolent protest demonstrations.

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This person served as Attorney General and Senator for New York. Challenging the war in Vietnam he decided to run for Presidential on the Democratic ticket. In the early hours of June 5, 1968, shortly after delivering a speech to celebrate his win in the California primary, he was shot in a kitchen corridor outside the ballroom of the Ambassador Hotel in Los Angeles. He died the next day at age 42.

**Study the events from the previous pages and place all events on the timeline.**

**1960**

**1980**

**1970**

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| **Create a title for the 60’s and 70’s decades. Explain the title you chose and how it characterizes the 60’s and 70’s.** |

**Notes: The Red Scare and McCarthyism**

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| A New Red Scare:  - Subversion |
| The Loyalty Review Program: |
| House Un-American Activities Committee (HUAC): |
| Hollywood on Trial:  - "Hollywood Ten" |
| Alger Hiss: |
| The Rosenbergs: |
| The Red Scare Spreads: |
| Senator Joe McCarthy: |

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| McCarthyism: |
| The McCarran Act: |
| McCarthy's Tactics:  McCarthy's Downfall:  - Censure |